

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

865-D.52

SEE 865d.01/107 FOR #1710

FROM Italy (Kirk) DATED May 29, 1936
TO NAME 1-1127 ...

REGARDING:

Consul General at Naples reported a rumor in Naples to effect that Mussolini was disposed to admit a certain number of Austrian and Hungarian emigrants to Ethiopia. Italian Legation in Budapest requested to forward to Rome their application as volunteer colonists.

In this connection, the American Consul General at Naples reported under date of May 20th and again confirmed on May 27th a rumor in Naples to the effect that Mussolini was disposed to admit a certain number of Austrian and Hungarian emigrants to Ethiopia, probably 100,000 of each nationality. The STAMPA, incidentally, reported from Vienna on May 22nd that 3,000 Hungarian war veterans, who had offered their services as volunteers at the beginning of the campaign, had now requested the Italian Legation in Budapest to forward to Rome their application as volunteer colonists.

865D.52/1

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

865-D.52

2

SEE 865d.01/107 FOR #1710

FROM Italy (Kirk) DATED May 29, 1936

TO NAME 1-1127 ...

REGARDING:

Colonization. Committee of Farm and Syndical Experts has been holding meetings during past few days. Program to be drawn up for Colonial Agriculture Office formed within Farm Labor Confederation. Decisions regarding-.

865D.52/2

Colonization.

The Committee of Farm and Syndical Experts (Page 15 of the despatch under reference) has been holding meetings during the past few days. This Committee, which is to draw up a program for the Colonial Agriculture Office formed within the Farm Labor Confederation, has decided:

- (1) to create a vocational school to train peasant pioneers;
- (2) to give a large number of special rural vocational courses, to issue a daily radio bulletin, and to circulate pamphlets and a bulletin of information on colonial farming;
- (3) to recommend that the Commissariat for Internal Migration and all other public organizations concerned should give preference to rural elements whenever requests are received for unskilled labor for the colonies, since in this way farmers would have an opportunity to study possibilities while engaged in public works projects;
- (4) to establish a correspondence center in Ethiopia to forward data to the Office and assist the Government in connection with the sending out of laborers.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

3

SEE 865d.01/119 FOR #1733

FROM Italy (Kirk) DATED June 10, 1936

TO NAME 1-1137 ***

REGARDING: Plans of the Italian Government for future colonization
of Italian East Africa.

865D.52/3

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 841.5151/558 FOR Despatch #2297
FROM Great Britain (Atherton) DATED June 27, 1936
TO NAME 1-1137 ...

REGARDING:

Italo-Ethiopian war.

Memorandum of conversation between Mr. Atherton and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. Chamberlain said that from recent reports, there is every indication that the Italian people do not want to settle in Ethiopia.

865D.52/4

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 0052.01/142 FOR Despatch #1756

FROM Italy (Kirk) DATED June 26, 1936
TO NAME 1-1187 ***

REGARDING: Lands- Italian East Africa. Resolution passed at meeting held June 14th in Ministry of the Colonies, that farmers and farm laborers sent out to Ethiopia shall be organized into militia units. Colonization of Italian East Africa.

865D.52/5

FASCIST ACTIVITIES

At a meeting held on June 14th in the Ministry of Colonies, attended by the Minister of Colonies, the Chief of Staff of the Militia, the Presidents of the Farmers' and Farm Laborers' Confederations, etc., it was resolved that farmers and farm laborers sent out to Ethiopia shall be organized into Militia units.

The following official communiqué regarding the appointment of Fascist Party officials for East Africa was published in the press on June 23rd:

"The Duce, at the instance of the Vice Secretary of the P.N.F. (National Fascist Party), has appointed the Fascists:

Guido Cortese (member of the P.N.F. since March 23, 1919) Federal Secretary of Addis Ababa;

Leonardo Gana, Federal Secretary of Asmara;

Alessandro Strazzo (member of the P.N.F. since January 1, 1921) Federal Secretary of Mogadiscio;

Mario Pigli (member of the P.N.F. since September 1, 1922) Federal Secretary of Harrar; Francesco Bellini, Federal Secretary of Gondar."

A Fascist organization for Italian women was founded in Addis Ababa on June 17th. While only ten women participated in the first meeting, it is reported that the Italian government expects wives of Italian officials and employees to increase the membership greatly in the near future.

COLONIZATION

During a meeting on June 16th, presided by the Minister for Colonies, and attended by the Chief of Staff of the Militia, the Presidents of the Farmers' and Farm Laborers' Confederations, the Directors General of the Ministry of Agriculture, of the Colonial Agricultural Institute, and of the Colonial Ministry, the following measures were approved:

(1) The Ministry of Colonies in agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture will use the services of the appropriate Confederations in the study and execution of colonization schemes.

(2) The two Ministries above mentioned will determine the types of agriculture that are to be carried on and will establish the zones to be assigned to various types of cultivation as follows:

(a) "national demographic colonization" - this will be handled by organized corps. The land cultivated will eventually become the property of those farming it.

(b) "small farms" - small and medium tracts of land will be sold outright to farmers having a modest capital and desiring to emigrate.

(c)

(c) "industrial colonization" to be carried on in regions where a large white settlement is not possible, by organizations established by the appropriate confederations and under the supervision of the Colonial Office and the local governments.

(d) "joint national-native farms" - under the direction of government technical services, with a view to increasing production and raising the general standard among the native farmers.

(3) The following surveys will immediately be made:

(a) Preliminary examination of juridical position of land tenure in order to reconcile colonization requirements and native rights.

(b) Technical examination of local agricultural features to establish possible crops and best types for colonization.

The experts commissions will be formed by the Colonial Office in agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture and the participation of experts of the appropriate confederations. It is believed these surveys can be completed during the rainy season and the first projects be started next fall.

(4) A Committee of experts for agriculture in East Africa is set up in the Ministry of Colonies to examine colonization schemes presented to the Ministry. The committee is composed of the:

Director of the Colonial Agricultural Institute,
President of the Confederation of Farm Labor,
National Secretary of the Farm Experts Syndicate,

Director

Director General of Agriculture in the
Ministry of Agriculture.

The first colonial groups are expected to center around Addis Ababa where conditions are more favorable. It is noted that the complicated system of land tenure in Ethiopia makes the problem of settlement by Italians without illegal seizure of native lands more difficult. Meanwhile, however, there are the private estates of the Negus, which are considered state property, and also the lands of the fugitive Rases and of all citizens who fail to obey Graziani's proclamation ordering them to return to their residence within 15 days, which will be confiscated and thus become available for Italian settlement. According to the *GIORNALE D'ITALIA*, the first nucleus of settlers, to be sent to the region around Addis Ababa, will fall under the "national demographic colonization" type and will be formed from among the Veterans Association (which handled the reclamation of the Pontine Marshes), the workers subsequently becoming the owners of the land cultivated, as has been done in the Pontine Marshes.

The Labor Bank has contributed 200,000 lire for relief organizations in East Africa, 100,000 lire for bonuses for the best Italian colonists in Africa to be assigned by the Commissariat for International Migration, and 100,000 lire for the institution of a cooperative organization among furloughed troops intending to remain in the colony.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

865D.52

6

SEE 8654.01/149 FOR #1776

FROM Italy (Kirk) DATED July 9, 1936

TO _____ NAME _____ 1-1137 ...

REGARDING:

Problem of Division of Conquered Lands. Reports concerning..

865D.52/6

Problem of Division of Conquered Lands.

With regard to the large number of agricultural laborers which are currently being sent to East Africa (see despatch No. 1764 of July 3, Italian Military Activities), the Assistant Military Attaché to this Embassy states that his observations have led him to the conclusion that before anything important can be accomplished by the Italians in an agricultural way in Abyssinia they must find a method for the satisfactory division of the farm lands between the native populations and their Italian conquerors. According to Major Fiske's observations nearly all the best and most fertile lands in Ethiopia are occupied and farmed by the natives who do not attempt to cultivate the less promising areas, whereas their primitive agricultural methods produce a very poor return even from the most desirable land.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

7

SEE 8654.01/157 FOR Despatch #1797

FROM Italy (Kirk) DATED July 22, 1936.
TO NAME 1-1137 . . .

REGARDING: Colonisation of Ethiopia by the Italians. Quotes statement made by Signor Lessona, Italian Minister of Colonies, regarding Italy's plans for-

wth

865D.52/7

865d.52

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 865d.01/166 FOR 41863

FROM Italy (Tittmann) DATED Sept. 2, 1936.
TO NAME 1-1187 ***

REGARDING: Italian administration and development of Ethiopia.

Establishment of a special office in Djibouti, and elsewhere
to assist laborers coming to Ethiopia. Total of 1500
already established in the capital.

865D.52 / 8

8

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 865d.01/171 FOR Despatch #1889

FROM Italy (Kirk) DATED Sept. 16, 1936
TO NAME 1 1127 o.p.

REGARDING: Colonization- Italian East Africa. Approval by the Council of Ministers of draft of a decree- law to give demobilized Italian veterans of the war with Abyssinia, preference in the concession of agricultural land.

Colonization.

The Council of Ministers at its meeting on September 12 approved the draft of a decree-law to give demobilized Italian veterans of the war with Abyssinia preference in the concession of agricultural land.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 865d.01/176 FOR Despatch #18

FROM Italy (Phillips) DATED Sept.30,1936
TO NAME J - 1127 o.p.

REGARDING:

Lands- Italian East Africa. Statements regarding Italian plans for Ethiopia which were made in an interview with a representative of the DEPEHE COLONIAL by the Minister of Colonies.

fp

865D.52/10

The following statements regarding Italian plans for Ethiopia were made in an interview with a representative of the DEPECHE COLONIAL by the Minister of Colonies, and reprinted in the Italian press on September 30th. After asserting that Italy would respect the rights of the natives in the conquered territory, Signor Lessona said "In a territory so vast and with such a sparse population, there is not lacking vacant land, the alleged rights to which are so vague that they may be considered undefinable.... Other lands will become available - that abandoned by the Negus and the Rasas who fled. As for Italian labor, it may be said that the whole plateau is suitable. The first experiments will be made in the territory of Addis Ababa. Asmara and Harrar also present favorable conditions, and Gimma, for certain occupations, will lend itself to interesting experiments." With regard to the government of the natives, the Minister declared "We do not intend to extend to the natives metropolitan legislation and civil equality, which, moreover, they would not understand or desire. We have given them greater and greater assistance in sanitary, social, and educational fields." After referring to the recent agreement between the Italian authorities and the Djibouti Railway Company (Embassy's despatch No. 1823 of August 5, 1936), Signor Lessona said "The capacities of the port and railway

"railway of Djibouti have proved insufficient for the new traffic; merchandise piles up and must wait a long time. The systematization of the Port of Assab and the road to Dessié, envisaged in the agreement of 1928, will remedy this abnormal situation."

The Mission of the National Council of Research, composed of Dr. Molinari, Dr. Guzzoni, and Dr. Larotanda (Embassy's despatch No. 1797 of July 22, 1936, page 18), arrived in Addis Ababa on September 24th. It is reported that this Mission will make studies of technical and economic problems involved in the development of the "Empire," reorganize inefficiently operated industries, encourage the establishment of new industries, and construct chemical laboratories in Addis Ababa for the study of geological specimens found by various expeditions in Ethiopia.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 865d.01/224 FOR Despatch #105

FROM Italy (Phillips) DATED Dec.2,1936
TO NAME 1-1127 ...

REGARDING: Lands- Italian East Africa. Communique published in the press on November 2nd in regard to number of Italian workers in Italian East Africa. Measures taken to protect Italian laborers in Italian East Africa.

fp

865D.52/11

KFC

Labor.

The following official communiqué regarding the number of Italian workers in Italian East Africa, was published in the press on December 2:

"From January 1935-XIV to November 30, 1936-XV there have been transported through the Commissariat for Migration and Colonization 155,599 workers to Italian East Africa. Taking into account those who have been repatriated upon the termination of their labor contracts, there are at present in the new territory of the Empire 102,754 Italian workers and more than 14,000 soldiers, who, demobilized in Ethiopia, have requested and obtained permission to remain and work in the Colony."

Compared with the statistics contained in the official communiqué issued on November 6 (Embassy's despatch No. 74 of November 12, 1936) the foregoing figures show an increase of 17,930 Italian workers and 2,000 demobilized soldiers in Italian East Africa during the month of November 1936.

With reference to the transportation of 30,000 laborers to Italian East Africa (Embassy's despatch No. 74 of November 12, 1936), the press has been reporting the departure every few days of contingents of from fifteen hundred to two thousand laborers from Genoa, Trieste, and Naples. According to the schedule, the transportation will be completed by December 19.

The press continues to report measures taken to protect Italian laborers in Ethiopia. A news despatch under Mogadiscio dateline of November 24 states that a surprise inspection of Fascist authorities revealing that the firm of Lasso at Bogel Magno was improperly feeding its employees, the Government imposed a fine of

100,000

-5-

100,000 lire and immediately dismissed the foreman
of the firm.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 865d.01/247 FOR Despatch #155
 FROM Italy (Phillips) DATED Jan.13,1937
 TO _____ NAME _____ 1-1137

865D.52/12

Economic and industrial development- Italian East Africa.
 REGARDING: Signor Tassinari, Undersecretary of State for Agriculture and
 Forests, sailed for Italian East Africa on January 4th to study
 the possibilities of developing the agriculture of that territory.

Economic and Industrial development.

Signor Tassinari, the Undersecretary of State for
 Agriculture and Forests, sailed on January 4th for Italian
 East Africa, where he will study the possibilities of de-
 veloping the agriculture of the conquered territory.

By viceregal decree, the Governor of Addis Ababa
 has been authorized to assign land in Addis Ababa at
 2 lire per square meter, for the construction of cheap,
 temporary houses. Purchasers must begin work on the
 houses within fifteen days after receiving the land and
 their houses must be inhabitable 120 days later.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 865d.01/262 FOR Despatch #253

FROM Italy (Phillips) DATED Feb. 24, 1937

TO NAME 1-1137

REGARDING: Colonization- Italian East Africa.

Colonization.

The first announcement of the departure of women for Ethiopia was made in the press on February 22nd when it was reported that 1,400 women had sailed from Genoa for Massaua in the SS "Colombo" to join their husbands, some of whom had been married by proxy.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 865d.01/290 FOR Despatch #383

FROM Italy (Phillips) DATED May 28, 1937
TO NAME 1-1137 GPO

REGARDING: Colonization-Italian East Africa. Discussion of the difficulties in connection with -.

fp

865D.52/14

GML/4

COLONIZATION.

As to colonization in Italian East Africa, the Government is aware of the difficulties and has discouraged all premature initiatives, in the belief that there must be no improvised action but a thoroughly worked-out plan. At the same time it must be quite clearly stated that should we relinquish the idea of settling a large mass of Italian workers in the Empire, we would be betraying one of the decisive ideas of the Ethiopian enterprise. The difficulties are great and extremely great is the effort required to surmount them. It will be particularly necessary, in this as in all other fields, to dismantle a certain luxurious mentality which is contrary to the discipline of Fascism and would threaten to jeopardize colonization. The tenacious, courageous Italian laborer invariably had the pioneer mentality and capacity when it was a case of making his way in foreign, and frequently hostile, territory. We are sure that the Italian laborer will cooperate in the work the Government is preparing to do for him, proud this time to work for himself and his country, under the Italian flag.

With this frank language we cannot be accused of a demagogical spirit. We desire also to state once for all that the Empire was not won with the blood of the legionaries nor founded by the Duce for the benefit of a

privileged...

privileged few, but first and foremost to give at last to this proletarian Italy an outlet for her energies.

In the territory of the Empire there is room for all initiatives. The variety of agricultural features makes all experiments possible. Large and average concerns of capitalistic type which can offer guarantees of technical and financial solidity, shorn of any idea of parasitism, will also be most welcome. They can usefully engage in agricultural and industrial production, even on a large scale.

But along with such concerns, in districts which are most adapted for Italian settlement, there will gradually, methodically, and on truly economic bases be developed that demographic colonization referred to above, which corresponds above all to a superior exigency of civilization and security as well as being a duty of social justice. I have said that demographic colonization must be developed along truly economic bases. This statement merits certain explanations:

1) I do not doubt that the interested governmental and semi-governmental organizations will, also by resorting to the contribution which private capital and banking credit will gladly extend for this great purpose, call as little as possible on the Treasury, which must already bear the enormous expenditure for the public works that are absolutely necessary for the initial organization of the Empire.

2) Demographic colonization in Africa must take place within the limitations and according to the methods adapted to the country.

3) ...

3) The wages paid to laborers in the Empire must depart from the level of wages at present paid for the great public works under way, which was established because of extraordinary circumstances and of the urgency of the work, and must be adjusted to the possibilities of agricultural production itself.

4) The Government will take steps to see that the repercussions of the high cost of living, which in certain regions of East Africa is simultaneously the cause and effect of high wages, are not felt in the territories designated for Italian settlement.

On the other hand, it is the Government's firm intention, in the Empire as in the reclaimed districts at home, to have wage workers become as soon as possible small landowners, supporting themselves and their families from the resources of their own farms.

This realistic language will not be displeasing to our vigorous workers. They know that the Fascist Government protects their welfare and their rights at every point. The social and welfare legislation recently issued by the Ministry for laborers in East Africa is one of the regime's greatest sources of legitimate pride. In no African colony does labor enjoy such complete legislative protection. The formation of the laborers' legions is one of the happiest achievements of Fascism. For demographic colonization the system of organization within Militia Legions will be developed in all sectors.

15

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 865d.01/292 FOR Despatch #432

FROM Italy (Phillips) DATED June 17, 1937

TO NAME I-1187 876

REGARDING: Lands- Italian East Africa. An official communique published June 2nd, in regard to movements of workers transferred to the Empire up to May 31st.

An official communique published on June 2nd, states that "the Commissariat for Migration and Internal Colonization

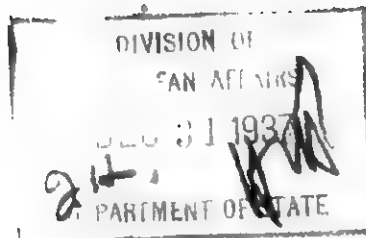
communicates the following figures referring to the movements of workers transferred to the Empire up to May 31st including specialists and chauffeurs: workers transferred, 188,252; workers repatriated, 73,524; workers deceased 1,196; workers present in Italian East Africa, 113,532." Another communique states that workers in Italian East Africa have sent over 200 million lire home to their families during May 1937, and almost two billion lire since January 1935. To these amounts must be added sums personally taken back to Italy by repatriated workers.

865d.52/15

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Voluntary

No. 74 - 1937



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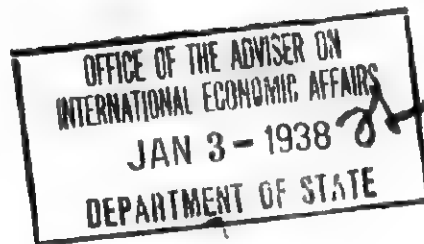
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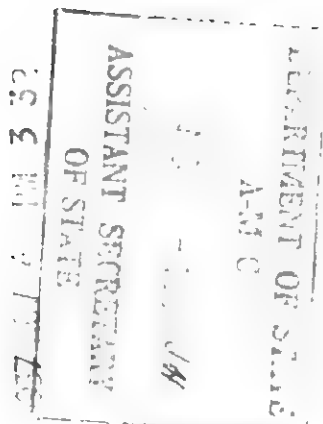
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RECORDING DESK
FILE -



FARM LOAN FINANCING IN LIBYA

By: American Consul

Withey

Howard F. Withey.

Naples, Italy.

Date of completion: October 20, 1937.

Date of mailing: October 27, 1937.

APPROVED:

Thomas D. Bowman

Thomas D. Bowman,
American Consul General.

865D.52/16

Decree No. 1692, dated October 9, 1937, published in the Official Gazette, authorizes the Savings Bank of Libya (Cassa di risparmio) to issue 400 million lire in bonds in addition to its present obligations. These bonds will bear 5 per cent interest, payable semi-annually, will be put on the market at 95 per cent of their face value in annual series of 40 million lire. The bonds will be retired in series the last of which will be redeemed at the end of 20 years.

The purpose of the Savings Bank's new issue of obligations is to provide funds for farm mortgage loans in the colony for the following uses stipulated in the decree: (a) Development and improvement of agricultural property; (b) irrigation and related hydraulic development; (c) land settlement.

The obligations are guaranteed by the colonial and by the national governments. The difference between receipts from mortgages and bond retirement disbursements - after deduction of overhead - goes to the Savings Bank.

B52
HFW.BL

Five copies to the Department of State.
One copy to the Commercial Attaché, Rome.

No. 190

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE STATE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

1938 JAN 29 PM 12 43

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JAN 31 1938
FILE MSG

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL
London, England.
January 18, 1938
DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

SUBJECT: Colonization of Abyssinia.

Copy furnished by the
Commercial Office (A-M/O)
To

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

WASHINGTON

SIR:

I have the honor to refer to a letter address-
ed to me on December 21, 1937, by Mr. Wallace Murray,
Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs of
the Department of State requesting the cooperation
of the London Consulate General in obtaining informa-
tion concerning political and economic conditions in
the British colonies, protectorates and mandates in
Africa, and in non-British African territories as well.

There is attached to this despatch a copy of an
article taken from the London TIMES of January 18,
1938. The article is based on a report from the cor-
respondent at Rome of the TIMES and refers to the de-
parture from Brindisi on January 17, 1938, on the
steamer ADRIA of 105 peasants who are to settle in
Italian East Africa. This event, it is stated,
marks the first step in efforts on the part of Italy
to find an outlet for her surplus population in her
newly won territories in Africa. This group of

Italian/

125.0780/23


865D.52/17

FILED

N/C

Italian peasants is to settle in the Chercher zone to the west of Harar.

Respectfully yours,


Henry M. Wolcott,
Consul.

✓ Enclosure: 

1. Copy of Article from
the TIMES, January 18, 1938.

Original and four copies to the
Department of State.
File copy.

Copy of Newspaper Article.

Title: COLONIZATION OF ABYSSINIA.

Sub-title: Italian Settlers Sail.

From our own Correspondent.
Rome, Jan.17.

The departure from Brindisi this afternoon in the steamer Adria of 105 peasants who are to settle in Italian East Africa, marks the real beginning of Italy's effort to make her newly won territories an outlet for her surplus population.

All the men, who are from 25 to 40 years of age, are the heads of families, and are specially chosen for their physique, their agricultural skill, and their "Fascist spirit." They come from the Puglia region, and are the first batch of Italian emigrants to be sent to Abyssinia under the aegis of the three regional emigration boards of Puglia, Romagna, and Veneto, whose creation was approved by the Council of Ministers of October 19 last. The land they are to cultivate has been specially selected by the Government in the Chercher zone to the west of Harar, as the soil is described as very rich and suitable for wheat and coffee growing. As soon as the men have settled down in their new homes, they will be joined by their families, and those who give satisfactory proof of their capacity as settlers will ultimately be allotted farms of their own of from 75 to 125 acres.

Brindisi was beflagged in honour of the emigrants, and they were visited in their quarters at the naval barracks by, among others, the Prefect and the local secretary of the Fascist Party, who in a brief speech conveyed to them the best wishes of Signor Starace, the party secretary. They were given the uniform which is to be worn by all these "Colonial Fascist Militia", as they are described, and a quantity of agricultural implements. To-day they marched, cheered to the echo, through the town to the port.

It is stated that in February the heads of 400 peasant families from the Romagna district will leave for the Wogare region in Central Abyssinia, and that a party 250 to 300 strong will soon follow from Veneto. More emigration boards are to be formed for five or six other regions in Italy, where the density of the population is particularly high. Each board, it is said, is planning to establish in its respective zone in Abyssinia at least 1,000 families in the next few years.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 8651.50/8 FOR Report #8

FROM Naples (Edwards) DATED Feb. 5, 1938
TO NAME 1-1137 870

REGARDING:

Italian colonization in Ethiopia.

Summary of newspaper article giving information concerning -.

8651.52/18

Quintuplicate to Department.

4824

Voluntary

No. 15 - 1938.

1938 MAR 1 PM 3 40

DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

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MAR 3 1938

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MAR 5 1938
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE ADVISER ON
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
MAR 14 1938
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

REGISTERED COLONIZATION IN
ABYSSINIA

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MAR 11 1938
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

By: American Consul

Withey
Howard F. Withey.

Naples, Italy. Date of completion; February 12, 1938

Date of mailing: February 16, 1938

APPROVED:

Thomas D. Bowman
Thomas D. Bowman
American Consul General

8650.52/19

FILED
MAR 14 1938

It has been quite generally known for some time that the Italian government intended to do something to encourage and organize Italian colonization in Abyssinia. The general idea is more or less related to the ancient Roman practice of planting colonies of ex-legionaries in conquered territory on the ground that trained former soldiers would be well qualified to protect their holdings and control the natives they lived among. The first batch to leave Italy were 106 farmers, heads of families from Apulia, who sailed a few days ago. Grain and coffee cultivation in the Harrar region is the objective.

This kind of colonization is at present in the hands of 3 companies organized under the terms of 3 nearly identical decree laws: December 6, 1937, No. 2325 (Official Gazette of January 27, 1938), for the Department of Apulia; the other two decree laws bear the same date and were published in the Official Gazette on January 25 and 26, 1938, for the Romagna and Veneto companies respectively.

The colonization regions assigned are as follows: zones set aside in the Ginnama region for the Veneto company; the Uoghera region for the Romagna company; the Cercer region in the Harrar government for the Apulia organization.

The high spots of the decrees cited, which fix the organization etc. of the colonization companies, are given below: all the decrees are alike in that regard.

The function of the companies is to forward colonization and agricultural development in

Ethiopia through the enrollment of farmers in Italy under employment contracts, their transportation to Ethiopia and their settlement on land there in the region allotted to the company. All such settlers are incorporated in the Fascist militia and the object is to settle them permanently on the land with their families under terms that will enable them to eventually acquire title.

The company is a quasi-public corporation under control of the Ministry of Colonies, with headquarters at Rome. The framework of its organization consists of a president (appointed by decree), the president's council, a consultative committee, and a board of auditors.

The president's council is presided over by the president and made up of members named by the ministries of Italian Africa, Interior and Finance; representatives of the Court of Accounts, General commanding the Fascist Militia, Migration and Colonization committee, the Fascist Party, National Social Welfare Institute, Bank of Naples, and the industrial and agricultural syndical Confederations, respectively.

The president is chairman of the consultative committee made up of representatives of the following: Governor General of Italian East Africa; Inspectorate of the Fascist Party; Governor of the region in which the company operates; Federation of Ex-Soldiers in the "government" (i.e. region just referred to; agricultural and industrial em-

ployees'

ployees' syndical confederations; Migration and Colonization Commissariat.

The three members of the Auditing Board are appointed, respectively, by the Ministry of Italian Africa, the Ministry of Finance, and the Bank of Naples.

The details of these companies' operations, their contract and other relations with the farmers recruited, et cetera, are left to the by-laws.

Fifty million lire is assigned to each company, repayable in 50 annual installments commencing at the end of the 10 years next following the company's legal formation. The Bank of Naples provides half this capital and the Social Welfare Institute the other half. Additional funds up to 5 million lire in all may be contributed by various public agencies.

852
HFW.BL

Copy to Embassy.
" " Commercial Attaché.

BETTER ENGLISH

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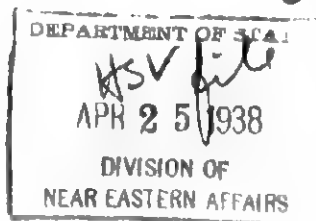
1938 APR 23 AM 10 16 WEST 42nd STREET
New York, N. Y.

DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

April 22, 1938

*And 4/24/38
HSV/CS*

His Excellency
The Secretary of State
Cordell Hull
Washington, D. C.



APR 30 1938

Dear Sir:

I take the liberty of herewith enclosing
reprint of my editorial appearing in the May issue
of Current Digest magazine.

I should very much appreciate receiving
your opinion on this my proposal.

Very truly yours,

[Signature]
Mr. Dagobert D. Runes

1 encl.

APR 27 1938

FILED

865D.52/20



Abyssinia for the Jews

Dagobert D. Runes

MY FRIEND made a startling suggestion. He had but recently returned from Palestine, disillusioned and shocked by the latest British plan for partition, and the apparent impossibility of reconciling the Arabs to Jewish colonization. "Five million Jews in Europe are today facing economic expropriation or exile. Why not a Jewish homeland in Ethiopia?" he said. "Since the Pharoahs it has been linked with Jewish history."

Why not a Jewish homeland in Ethiopia? However, it is not sufficient to review a proposal, such as the one made above, merely from the statistical point of view; there must be room—ample room—for human bias, human sentiment as well as human need. Let us therefore begin with European diplomacy as it is developing under our eyes.

One of the terms of the present British accord with Italy provides for the cessation of anti-British propaganda among the Arabs. A corollary of this is that Italy will no longer find it profitable to support, morally or otherwise, the Arab cause against the Jews. Indeed, the new orientation of Italian foreign policy, once the conquest of Ethiopia is recognized by England and France—which is practically a certainty at this time—envisages a collapse of the mild flurry of anti-Semitism which broke out not long ago in certain sections of the Italian press.

And a three power alliance between England, Italy and France may be successful in mitigating the further rise of anti-Semitism. It may perhaps start discussions for a concrete solution of the problem, without benefit of Hitler.

For Jews all over the world, and particularly those living in European countries where internal and external politics have caused them to serve as a scapegoat, this is a fair augury. It will mean that a *cordon sanitaire* has been thrown around Germany, Poland, Austria and Rumania to prevent the further spread of anti-Semitism. In any new orientation toward the Jews, Italy will henceforth play a part. It is true, that in Italy there are only about 40,000 Jews. But as Professor Einstein once pointed out, when the infection is stopped among key nations, the attitude toward the Jews elsewhere will tend to become saner, the air will be cleared and healthy solutions will take precedence over discrimination and persecution. In any future solution of this question, which is now in the politically-wise hands of England, France and Italy, the Jews themselves will contribute.

The Jews have in the past offered the most viable solutions to their own problem. Zionism is only one of them; colonization in undeveloped South American countries is another. Under the British mandate in Palestine, Zionism has prospered up to a certain point, in spite of Arab hostility. Modern farming methods, scientific development of arid lands and water power, the building of the Port Tel Aviv, have

been conspicuous achievements attesting to Jewish enterprise. So successful indeed have the Jews been in reclaiming the land that thousands of Arabs, who had abandoned their homes and farms, returned to profit by the multiplied opportunities for making a living from the land.

Zionism Becomes Reality

As everybody knows, it was during the war that the ancient Jewish longing for a "national homeland" became something of a reality. The orthodox Jews in the ghettos of Poland, Galicia and Russia dreamed every Passover of returning to Zion, and always ended the feast with the nostalgic words: "Next year in Jerusalem!" However, the large majority of Jews in the western world looked upon Zionism as chimerical. The national homeland was merely a far-off dream, and the practical difficulties which lay in the path of its realization loomed as insuperable. And there were many, too, who looked with complete disfavor on Zionism as a solution of the Jewish problem.

But during the war British diplomacy saw Zionism as an idea which could be utilized to advantage. Chaim Weizman, the famous chemist, was won over and persuaded to head the movement which

Theodor Herzl had founded in the nineteenth century. It was felt that if Palestine were promised them, under British protectorate, Jews from all over the world—not only in America but in the enemy countries, Jews fighting in the German and Austrian armies,—would rally to the Allied cause. Under General Allenby, with thousands of Jewish volunteers in his ranks, the British triumphantly entered Jerusalem. Later came the Balfour declaration promising the Jews a national homeland in Palestine. It was only then that Zionism, hitherto dormant, assumed the status of a political reality.

After the war, when thousands of Jews had emigrated to Palestine, the question of Arab independence surged up, since the British had likewise made a definite promise to the Arabs, the McMahon pledge, to establish their independence. The Arabs saw thousands of Jewish immigrants streaming into Palestine, taking over the land, building towns, starting schools and colleges, cultivating, making roads. While many of the Arabs profited by Jewish colonization, many more resented this invasion, and their resentment was continually stirred up by their leaders. The result was a series of uprisings which for twenty years has made peace in Palestine merely relative. The tension has increased, not lessened, with the passage of years, and the latest British attempt at solution seems to have pleased neither Jews nor Arabs. The

proposal was, in brief, to split the strip west of the Jordan into three parts, offering the Jews less than 5000 square miles of arable land, an area utterly inadequate for the needs of colonization. The masses of Jews feel that both their Zionist leaders and the British have let them down. This bitter set-back has wrecked the hopes of millions of Jews for a national homeland.

This leaves the Jewish problem still far from solution at a time when the situation of Jews in many parts of Europe is extremely critical. With the fresh onset of persecutions in Germany, Poland, Austria and Rumania, there are—or will be shortly—some five million homeless or exiled Jews. The narrow strip of land between the Jordan and the Mediterranean—which now holds half a million Jews and a million Arabs—could not possibly absorb the Jews who are today threatened with exile.

Jewish Background in Ethiopia

WHERE, then, can they go? If we except Palestine, there is no country more permeated with Jewish history and tradition than Ethiopia. This fact, I have concluded, should tend to make it acceptable to Jews.

Legend has it that when the Jews migrated from Egypt, a dissident faction cut themselves off from the main body in the wilderness and, wandering up the Nile, reached the highlands of Ethiopia where they

settled to cultivate the land. They came to be known in the land of their adoption as Falashas, which means stranger, wanderer, or immigrant in the Geez language. Whether the Jews came to Ethiopia by way of the Nile, or whether they crossed the Red Sea from the Arabian littoral, they can trace their history in Ethiopia almost as far back as in Palestine. The descendants of the original Falashas now number almost a quarter of a million. They live in the highlands away from the coast and have been but little affected by the invasions of Europeans. They are dark-skinned Jews who have never lost their racial or religious identity.

When Frumentius, fourth-century Phoenician missionary, arrived in Abyssinia, this "Father of Peace," as he was called, made many converts to Christianity among the Jewish dwellers of the highlands. Having been nurtured on the Messianic lore of the Old Testament, they were ready to accept the Gospel version of the coming of Christ. The primitive Christianity of Alexandria, steeped in the Jewish residue, was disseminated among the natives, and thus was founded the Coptic Church of Abyssinia. The Coptic Church still observes two sabbaths, Saturday and Sunday, in addition to the other Old Testament holy-days. It practices the Jewish rite of circumcision and extends it to the female sex. The church edifice is divided according to the Mosaic house of prayer; that

is, into three separate parts: the hol of holies, where the ark of the covenant is kept, the altar, and the gallery for worshippers who, like the Jews, solemnly kiss the door post or *mezuzza* on entering.

The Mosaic law is held in great esteem by the Coptic Christians although stealing, oddly enough heads the list of Thou-Shalt-Nots. Robinson MacLean, correspondent for the *Toronto Star*, records the following reply from a native Ethiopian priest to his question: "Do you know the Commandments of God?"

The priest answered: "Yes. They were written on stone, and they say not to steal, not to tell lies when someone calls you witness, to love God with all your heart, not to touch your brother's wife, and to love him with all your heart. Don't like anyone's money, and like your brother like your own self. Don't believe anything wood or tree or river. Honor the day that is God's will. Believe there is only one God, and don't try to use anything bad on somebody." Thus it will be seen how deeply the Jewish theology has entered the consciousness of the Ethiopian masses. The unbroken line of Jewish kinship is evident in the royal genealogy: Haile Selassie, Lion of Judah, prides himself on being a direct descendant of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. The myth goes that the son of their union, Menelek, was given an exact replica of the ark of the covenant by his father. But he was

not contented with an imitation and robbed the temple in Jerusalem, substituting the copy. In the holy city of Axum, there is a Coptic church which allegedly contains the authentic ark of the covenant.

Queen Judith

ACCORDING to Ethiopian tradition, the Hebrew tribe of Gideon once dominated the province of Semia; and in the year 1000 the Jewish Queen Judith conquered nearly all the provinces of Ethiopia and held sway over the land for forty years. After her death, the conquered territories broke away and the Jewish tribes moved back to the mountain fastnesses of the west. It is not necessary to accept the legend as historically accurate in order to recognize what is fairly obvious: the Falashas, the dark-skinned Jews, are a remnant of the original band of Hebrew wanderers. They are the nucleus that clung to their faith, the faith of their Canaanite fathers. Others, it may be assumed, entered the fold of the Coptic church.

Until the nineteenth century, Europe had never heard of these isolated Ethiopian Jews, who called themselves *Beth Israel*, the house of Israel. They were unaware of the existence of any Jews outside their own community.

Let us look a little closer at these African Jews. Their synagogues are known as *mesgids* and in their service they follow the orthodox Mosaic

ritual which also survives among orthodox Jews in the western world today. They live in small compact communities, the center of which is their synagogue, usually a straw-thatched clay hut, and their priests belong to the tribe of *Kabanim*. These Jews are excellent farmers, and they are also skillful carpenters, masons, smiths, weavers, potters, and basket-makers. They do not use the Hebrew tongue. Their Bible is written in the Geez language which has not been spoken there since the thirteenth century. Contact by western Jews with this remnant of their race was first established by Joseph Halevy in 1868; and in 1906 Rabbi Margolies of Florence formed a Falasha Aid Committee for the purpose of sending them Jewish literature and erecting schools.

Advantages of Ethiopia

IN view of the above, any suggestion to the Italian government that Ethiopia be thrown open to colonization by the Jews cannot be ruled out on the score of sentiment or as counter to Jewish tradition. Ethiopia, with its fertile upland soil, with its virgin resources waiting development cries for colonists. It has, at various levels, tropical, sub-tropical and temperate climates. It would offer the Jew a homeland such as he has never conjured up in his wildest dreams. Ethiopia possesses an area of 350,000 square miles—almost as great as France and Spain

combined—and has a population of but seven and a half millions. According to recent reports by Italian experts, more than half the territory is arable. The lowlands of Somaliland and Danakil are hot and dry, although they are not desert areas; in any case these regions can be irrigated by the diversion of the streams that feed the Nile, which is part of the new Italian plan. The lower basin of Sobat is hot and swampy. The swamps are at present being drained. In general, however, the country is healthy.

The year is divided into three seasons. Winter lasts from October to February; summer or the hot season follows and ends about the middle of June, giving way to the rainy season. The apex of the rainy season is reached in July and August, its effects being most felt in the Takazze basin. The districts of Gojam and Wallega are subject to heavy rains until the middle of September. The mean temperature is between 60 to 80 degrees.

Ethiopia is a beautiful country, with an admirable, but as yet undeveloped seacoast close by in Eritrea, high mountains, and a great variety of vegetation. The glens and ravines are thickly wooded. In the various regions there are date palms, mimosa, wild olive, sycamores, juniper, laurel, myrrh and gum, yellow pine, fig, orange, lime, pomegranate, peach, apricot, and bananas. The grape has not yet been satisfactorily cultivated, al-

though it can be grown; coffee, cotton, sugar cane and indigo plants grow well in certain sections. And there are many strange trees and plants, the *kussa*, for instance, a species of rose that grows from eight to ten feet high and whose fruit yields seeds that are used as a pleasant spice.

The soil of Ethiopia is God's blessing for the modern farmer equipped with tractor and power plow. In the valleys excellent crops of maize, durra, wheat, barley, rye, pease, and millet are grown. There are indigenous oil-producing plants, as well as the peanut and castor bean.

In addition, there is an abundance of domestic animals. The ox is most common, and a breed of cattle resembling the Jersey. The sheep find ample pasturage in the uplands. There are many varieties of goats, including the silken-haired kind found in Arusi Galla. Small, vigorous horses are numerous; but the mule is man's best friend in this country, used both as a mount and a transport animal. He can stand any climate, travels the mountain paths with sure foot, and easily carries immense loads. Visitors to Ethiopia agree that the country is well adapted to stock raising, and that the natives, lacking scientific methods both in stock-breeding and agriculture, have not taken the first steps toward exploiting Ethiopia's potentialities.

This is also true of the mineral

wealth. There are gold-bearing veins of quartz in the Wallega district and in southern Shoa. Some placer mining has been carried on in the south. Beside undetermined quantities of gold, silver, iron, coal, there is rock-salt, which the Ethiopians, along with Maria Theresa thaler and guns, have used as currency.

Italian Progress in Colonization

THE six year plan of road-building launched by the Italian government is already showing remarkable results. Hitherto Ethiopia's roads in the rainy season have practically disappeared in bogs and swamps. The new asphalt highways now stretch from Massawa to Dessie and Addis Ababa. Dessie today resembles a bonanza town of the old United States frontier. There is the same sense of hot-house, overnight growth, and a tremendous bustle of activity; modern shops, electrically lighted, stand side by side with ramshackle wooden shacks and straw huts. The Italians have recognized the truth of Cecil Rhodes' remark that "Africa is a problem of transportation." Billions of lire are being spent to build roads through jungles and over high mountain ranges, and efforts are being made to clear up and drain malarial regions. At present there are some 80,000 Italians residing in or near Addis Ababa, enlisted in the task of administration,

education, farming and road-building. In the entire country there are approximately 150,000 white laborers. The settlements of the labor battalions consist of shacks, portable metal houses, equipped with army cots, shower baths and radio sets. Canteens and taverns are beginning to dot the main highways, with packing cases serving as chairs and tables. Bars and grocery stores have sprouted here and there in the wilderness.

While at first the pacification methods applied to the natives were cruel and vindictive, calmer counsels have since prevailed. Schools have been opened for the young, and except in the more remote provinces, clinics and medical care have done much to reconcile the Ethiopians to Italian rule. Over a thousand doctors, after a brief intensive course at home in colonial medicine and sanitation, have been assigned to key posts in Ethiopia. Their work is to treat both natives and colonizers. Around Harrar, which is a Moslem city, the inhabitants have begun to exhibit a friendly attitude toward the Italians, joining the Italian forces as auxiliary troops. The Coptic Christians in the Amharic district are still discontented, it is true, because the priests have lost the fat revenues which they received from Haile Selassie, who under their guidance refused to abolish slavery in his empire.

If Premier Mussolini would open Ethiopia to the Jews, who have

always lived amicably side by side with the Italians in Italy, the problem of colonial appeasement would no doubt be made easier. The Ethiopians are a simple naive people, although fierce as warriors; but their poverty is such that, as foreign correspondents relate, a bodyguard could be hired for less than two dollars a month, and the average wage of field workers was about two cents a day. It is reasonable to assume that they would make no objection to the immigration of Jews who as the colonization in Palestine has shown, benefited not only themselves but their Arab neighbors. With the help of the Italians, the Jews, financed by their co-religionists all over the world, would address their industry to the problem of land development, and in the process they would automatically raise the level of Abyssinian life. The economic and cultural plane of the people would be elevated by this threefold cooperation.

Ethiopia for the Jews

THE Jews have been at all times admirable interpreters of Italian culture. They distinguished themselves as Italian art historians, as literary critics, as philosophers, poets and painters. Both Mediter-

anean peoples, Italians and Jews, can labor peacefully side by side in a common enterprise, such as the colonization of Ethiopia presents. Il Duce prides himself on having liberated thousands of Galla slaves from their Amharic masters. But there are today in Europe thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of Jews, on the verge of economic and political servitude, who would grasp at the opportunity of free colonization in such a rich and unexploited land as Ethiopia. They would supply armies of farmers, technicians, engineers, teachers and doctors.

What the Jews have achieved in past centuries in Spain, what they are achieving today in Palestine, they can achieve under favorable auspices in Ethiopia. From the sentimental point of view, Ethiopia has a unique appeal in its past history—home of a lost tribe, ruled by Queen Judith. And in the present it is the homeland of a quarter of a million children of Beth Israel who still practise Hebrew rites. All these imponderables, apart from the potential resources of the land itself, should appeal to Jews with a realistic vision, as well as to the practical administrators of the new Italian experiment in Africa.

April 30 1938

In reply refer to
NE 865D.52/20

My dear Dr. Runes:

Acknowledgment is made of your letter of April 22, 1938, enclosing a reprint of your article entitled "Abyssinia for the Jews", which appeared in the CURRENT DIGEST magazine for May, 1938.

While your article has been read with interest, you will of course appreciate that the Department can express no official opinion in regard to a private proposal of this nature. It is suggested, however, that you may wish to bring your views to the attention of the various organizations interested in Jewish problems, which might be in a position to comment on your proposal.

Sincerely yours,

For the Secretary of State:

Wallace Murray
Chief, Division of Near Eastern Affairs

✓
CR 1A
APB 24 1938.

Dagobert D. Runes, Ph.D.,
152 West 42nd Street,
New York, New York.

NE HSV/LS

865D.52/20

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 865d.00/34 FOR Report #44

FROM Naples (McCloud) DATED April 28, 1938
TO NAME 1-1127 ...

REGARDING: Colonization - Italian East Africa.
Discussion of the problem of demographic --.
Fascist Party has intervened to provide institutions
of a political, economic and educational character,
similar to those existing in Italy.
First colonists have started work in fertile regions
of Amhara, Uoggera, Hararino, Cercer, Sidamo and in
parts of western Ethiopia.

865D.52/21

1. Intervention of the Party. This problem of demographic colonization places a serious demand upon the resourcefulness and industry of Italian emigrants if the Empire is to prosper. To this end the Fascist Party has intervened in order to provide institutions of a political, economic and educational character, similar to those existing in the Mother Country. Branches of the following organizations have been set up thus far in the capital city: "Federazioni Fasciste", "Fasci", "i comandi della Gioventù Italiana Littorio", "Dopolavoro", "gli uffici del Lavoro", etc.

It is considered only logical and right that Italian workers, assisted and protected by syndical laws at home should continue to enjoy these benefits upon migration to the Empire where, because of a new and difficult existence they should not be denied traditional basis for working conditions with which they are acquainted.

Therefore, the Party has established several bureaus, directly affiliated with the Commissariat of Internal Migration on the one hand, and with the local colonial Fascist Federations, on the other. These bureaus coordinate the related activities, of the two services mentioned, give advice to colonists, provide Fascist educational facilities, and exercise vigilance in such matters as insurance against the misfortunes of work, etc. Likewise syndical relationships, in a broad (upbringing) sense, and control of prices are supervised.

The Party, also, has the function of resolving syndical-corporative controversies and acts as a placement

service for colonists. With the bureaus collaborate representatives of various federations in the Empire there in the quality of observers which do not have an officially precise definition of functions and competences. They are called upon to render assistance in a consultive capacity and to work in strict harmony with the organs of the Party.

2) Colonization. This question is inseparably linked with that of expanding Ethiopia's agricultural pursuits - discussed in this report under the heading "Implementation", - particularly "Grain and Agrarian Centers". Additional information on the subject follows.

One project by the Fascist Party now underway is a colonization based upon regional considerations. Certain designated sections of Italy will be called upon to supply immigrants well trained in the industries typical of their respective provinces. Such projects will be known as "Romagna d'Ethiopia", "Puglia d'Ethiopia", "Veneto d'Ethiopia", "Alta Lombardia d'Ethiopia", "Piedmont d'Ethiopia", "Liguria d'Ethiopia, etc."

The several regions will be asked to send, each year for five consecutive years, 500 colonizing families. The heads of these families will leave first followed at a two year interval by the remaining members.

Then, for a period of two years these heads of prospective colonial families will work on collective

agricultural

agricultural and related projects. They will be organized along military lines and their activities will be directed by the Fascist Party representatives in the colony working in cooperation with the syndical organizations and the commissariat for internal migration.

At the end of successive two year periods, those workers recognized as capable and industrious will receive for operation under their own direct responsibility, farms varying in size according to the estimated work capacity of their respective families; the sliding scale will be from a minimum of 30 hectares to a maximum of 50 hectares per family.

The first colonists, emigrating under this plan are said to have started work in the fertile regions of Amhara, Uoggerà (between Semien and the Taffa), Hararino, Cereer (near Addis Abeba), along the principal rivers in the Galla lake zone, at Sidamo and in several parts of western Ethiopia.

3)

Following the initiative taken by the Fascist Party, other colonizing enterprises have been started, among them one directed by the "Opera Nazionale Combattenti" near the capital city. The area allotted to this development is in the high Anase valley overlooking Addis Abeba. The development will be fan-like in shape with permanently established farms, owned and operated almost entirely by whites so that proper defence may be assured by a compact white population grouped about the capital (presumably against possible uprising

uprising of the blacks). It is planned that like developments will take place throughout the entire Scioa region.

Similarly, private agricultural agencies are operating at Oletta and Biscioffu. Each agency, having some 5,000 hectares at its disposal, is engaged in demarking farms of 60 hectares costing approximately 750 lire per hectare. Barnhouses are being erected at an average cost of 30,000 lire apiece. It is estimated that the debt which each colonizing family will contract, under this scheme, will be approximately 75,000 lire, a debt which the agency feels can be discharged over five or six years of operation at the end of which time, the head of the family will come into full ownership of his farm.

Following the inauguration of the programs mentioned above demographic colonization will be extended to other zones notably the Uollega said to be rich in mineral resources and offering, as a frontier region, new outlets to the nearby market of the Sudan. It is believed that Italian colonists along the western frontier will constitute a political and defence element of exceptional value to the new Empire.

Those enthusiastic for promoting colonization of the new territory seem to feel that the creation of a desire among Italy's agricultural classes to migrate will not be ^a difficult one. They believe that

it will be only necessary to fully acquaint the people with the bright future which awaits them as pioneers of the Empire. To this end studied propaganda is being disseminated regularly by means of the radio, press, platform and various publications.

A still easier phase of the colonization problem to solve should be that of encouraging people to migrate to urban centers. However this step is to be held in abeyance for the present; it is considered infinitely more important at this time to promote the migration of those engaged in agricultural and related pursuits.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

811b.55 J/1
SEE 811b.5565/1/ FOR Tel. 5 pm.

FROM Milan (.....Sholes.....) DATED Sept. 6, 1938.
TO NAME 1-1137 ***

REGARDING: Ethiopia as field for colonization by Italian Jews.
Jewish Central Refugee Committee for Italy
considering -

M

865D.52/22

2 4

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 840.48 Refugees/1270 FOR Tel#12 5 p.m.

FROM Italy (Phillips) DATED Jan. 12, 1939
td NAME 1-1127 o.p.

REGARDING:

Interview with representatives of the Committee for the Assistance of Jews in Italy who stated that they desired to impress upon the American Government that not a single Jew would voluntarily place himself at the mercy of the Italian regime in Ethiopia or anywhere else.

8654.52
7050.52/23

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 840.48 Refugees/1282 FOR Tel. #15. 6 pm

FROM Italy (Phillips) DATED Jan. 13, 1939

TO NAME 1-1127 ***

REGARDING: Migration of Jews to Ethiopia. Mussolini states that on account of their general attitude towards Ital. it is not possible to consider arranging for any considerable migration of Jews to Ethiopia; that in his opinion the only countries which can receive and organize a considerable Jewish immigration are those in which large sparsely populated areas and great resources are available.

EU
NE

JR

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

Rome

Dated January 13, 1939

Rec'd 2:35 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

15, January 13, 6 p.m.

My telegram No. 2, January 3, 9 p.m.

I received today from Count Ciano a copy of the Duce's reply to the resident's letter which he tells me has been sent to the Italian Embassy in Washington for delivery via the Department.

note
865d.52

Mussolini's letter follows closely the lines of his remarks reported in my No. 2. He states that on account of their general attitude towards Italy it is not possible to consider arranging for any considerable migration of Jews to Ethiopia; that the question does not concern only Jews in Italy or in any other country but concerns practically all European states and must be considered as a general European question if it is to be solved along constructive lines; that in his opinion the only countries which can receive and organize a considerable Jewish immigration are those in which large sparsely populated areas and great resources are available, although smaller overseas countries might also

RECEIVE

840.48 (Refugees) / 1282

-2- #15, January 13, 6 p.m., from Rome.

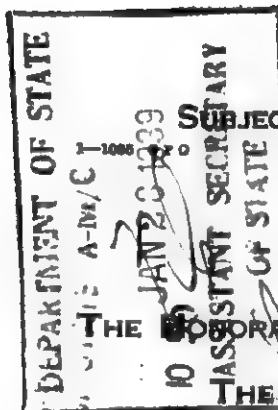
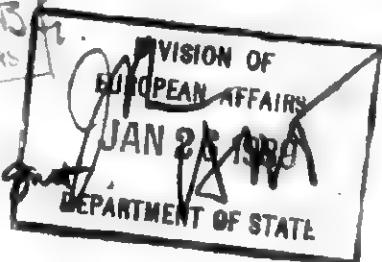
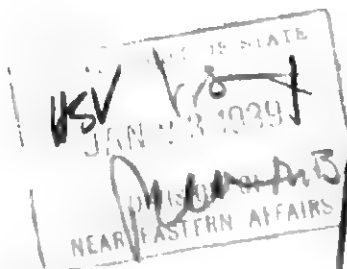
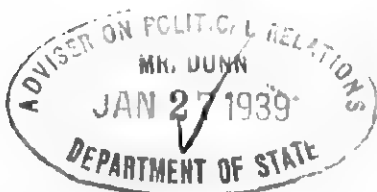
RECEIVE a certain number if the migration could be properly organized by international agreements, and that in his opinion the most practical solution would be the creation of a real Jewish state elsewhere than in Palestine in order that Jews might have a government of their own to look to for assistance and protection. In conclusion the Duce states that he will be pleased to study any concrete plan which the President may have under consideration, convinced as he is that a solution of the Jewish problem on a practical basis is highly desirable.

The tone of the letter is cordial and friendly.

PHILLIPS

HPD

AMERICAN CONSULATE,
Nairobi, Colony of Kenya, Africa,
December 15, 1938.



SUBJECT:

Progress in Abyssinia.

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

WASHINGTON.

JAN 30 1939

I have the honor to enclose a clipping entitled "Progress in Abyssinia" appearing in this morning's paper. Although it is an abstract from an article appearing in the London Times, I am taking the liberty of forwarding it to the Department, as it is possible that the original article has not been sent the Department.

Respectfully yours,

E. Talbot Smith
E. Talbot Smith
American Consul

Enclosure:

No. 1. Clipping.

800
ETS/GH

Original and four copies
to the Department of State

865D.52/25

FILED

PROGRESS IN ABYSSINIA

Roads Built: "High Standard Of Security" Reached

A Correspondent of "The Times," lately in Abyssinia, has given a valuable account of the progress of colonization and development in the new Italian Colony. The correspondent travelled over 4,000 miles in Italian East Africa and despite the banditry which still exists, he says that the Italians have established a high standard of public security.

Long stretches of tarred roads have already been made, serving hundreds of miles of country.

Three types of settlement are being considered and advance parties of men are already busy clearing the ground and building villages for the reception of the new settlers.

At present there are a quarter of a million resident Italians in Abyssinia.

Following are extracts from the article.

Nowhere is it harder to disentangle fact from fiction than in Italian East Africa. Although full reports appear in the local Press of the fighting in Waziristan not a word is said of skirmishes nearer home, and the monthly lists of officers and men killed in "police operations" are published without explanation. Consequently the wildest rumours are frequently current, and if they find their way into foreign papers the official failure to supply a full statement is the root cause.

Between the end of the rains in 1937 and last June, there were disturbances in the Goggiam, a large district between Addis Ababa and Gondar, which has always been a centre of unrest. The Italians repeated the mistake which has been made a hundred times by the British; they established small posts with a subaltern and a handful of men to be wiped out at their leisure by the turbulent tribesmen. These "unfortunate incidents" involved the sending of other troops to restore order.

The Bandit

More serious perhaps is the banditry perennial in certain parts. Some of the small tribes or sections of have "always" been bandits, hate and despise work and take they need from their

column accompanied by a lorry mounting a machine-gun. Epidemics of cattle stealing have broken out in some places, and the Residents do not know how to deal with the thieves. The new penal code does not allow of the former harsh punishments, and the native looks on prison as a holiday with regular food and no work. Some Residents have found that the best deterrent is to set the thief to labour on the roads without pay.

One of the first difficulties of the Italian Government was to get men to administer the new Empire. On the whole the most successful have been officers of the regular army who had served with native troops. At present all the governors of the five provinces, with the exception of those in Somalia and Addis Ababa, are generals who have served in Libya.

Roads

At least half of all conversations in the Empire turn on the roads, finished, half-finished, or lacking. The terrain presents every natural obstacle from mountains thousands of feet high to plains flooded in season. Those who knew the miserable bridle-paths before the war or drove over the hastily constructed military tracks will regard what has been accomplished with deep respect. There are, however, hundreds of miles which exist only in the imagination. The great trunk road

Harar. Two other roads are to be built; one following a more southerly and westerly route will join the first at Gorraheh, while a third will be an outlet for the products of the rich province of Galla and Sidamo. Work on the road from Gimma to Addis Ababa is being pushed forward as rapidly as possible; that province contains large forests with 60 varieties of trees, and yet in the absence of a practicable road wood for building has to be imported from Yugoslavia.

East Coast Harbours

With the exception of Massawa, nearly 1,000 miles from Addis Ababa, no natural harbour is to be found along the whole of the coast line on the Red Sea or the Indian Ocean. Docks capable of berthing 10,000-ton steamers are being constructed at Assab to be ready in 1940, but that port will never be suitable for the transit of perishable goods, as the road has to cross over a hundred miles of the torrid Danakil desert. Mogadishu is a shallow open roadstead exposed to the monsoon; a plan is under consideration for the construction of a port with a canal large enough for ocean-going steamers. To the south Berca, the outlet for the valuable banana trade of Genale, affords a little protection for shipping; Chisimaio, just north of the Kenya frontier, should not present such difficulties as Mogadishu.

Minerals

The question of railways is hardly yet in the realm of practical politics. It may be settled eventually by the local mineral resources. If steam coal were found it would encourage the building of railways; if petrol were found, the decision would probably be for roads only. Extreme caution marks official statements on the mineral resources of the Empire. No petrol has been found except for the slight traces already known to exist in the Danakil desert and the islands off Massawa; and experts report that the rock formation of the great central plateau gives no hope of oil wells. Lignite has been found near Addis Ababa and iron in several parts. Small gold mines are being worked in Eritrea, and there are alluvial deposits in many of the rivers. In the Beni Sciangu, a little known region on the Sudan frontier, a valuable platinum mine has been found. It is hoped in three years to meet all the demands of the Italian market for mica and entirely to supersede supplies now imported from Italy.

Settlement

The popular exuberance which followed the conquest of the Empire, and the uninformed statements which represented it as an immediate outlet for thousands of colonists, are things of the past. Time must elapse before large numbers of emigrants can be sent. At present

More serious perhaps is the banditry perennial in certain parts. Some of the small tribes or sections of tribes have "always" been bandits; they hate and despise work and take what they need from their weaker neighbours, seeing no reason why they should abandon an easy mode of life. In some districts no girl will consider marriage until her suitor brings her proof that he has killed at least one man; one Resident, regarding women as the real cause of his trouble, inquired despairingly what he was to do with them. Ironically enough, the number of bandits has been increased by the Italians themselves. During the war they armed sympathizers who harassed the rear and flanks of the Negus' armies and who, having received the boon of modern rifles, have no intention of giving them up.

Taking into account the vastness of the territory, five times as large as Italy, a high standard of public security has been reached. The present writer recently motored over 4,000 miles in Italian East Africa and only on one occasion—and that for half an hour—was it thought necessary for the car to join a motor

of feet high to plains flooded in season. Those who knew the miserable bridge-paths before the war or drove over the hastily constructed military tracks will regard what has been accomplished with deep respect. There are, however, thousands of miles which exist only on paper. The great trunk road from Massawa to Addis Ababa is now tarred except for about 100 miles north of that town, where a tunnel 500 yards long has been driven through Mount Termaber in order to avoid the worst passes. The road from Massawa to Gondar via Asmara is regarded as the greatest engineering feat in the Empire; that too is tarred as far as the great gorge of the Tacazze (250 miles); from there to Ualcheft there is a good macadam surface which will resist the rains. It has to climb the sheer face of the mountain. 7,700 ft. before coming out on to the immense plain which descends gradually to Gondar. In the south Mogadishu is connected with the Villaggio del Duca degli Abruzzi by a light railway (120 miles), after which 500 miles of tarred road run to Mustahil and will eventually reach Addis Ababa via

The popular exuberance which followed the conquest of the Empire, and the uninformed statements which represented it as an immediate outlet for thousands of colonists, are things of the past. Time must elapse before large numbers of emigrants can enter the country. At present experiments are being conducted at the agricultural centres near the provincial capitals to ascertain the types of crops and vegetables suited to the soil and the climate at different altitudes and promising prosperity to future farmers. Every effort, too, is being made to induce the natives to improve their primitive methods of cultivation and to grow more grain in order to reduce the large quantity which has to be imported to feed the 250,000 resident Italians. Cattle have always represented the chief wealth of the country, hides being one of the most important exports. In some districts the stock is very poor, and in all districts totally uncared for; veterinary surgeons are trying to stamp out disease and to teach the elements of stock breeding.

Three types of colonization are planned. The first is democratic, in which chosen families from the same districts in Italy will be settled in newly built villages. Three advance parties of about 100 men each have already arrived and are clearing the ground and building houses. The second type is industrial, concessions being given to firms or individuals capable of supplying the necessary capital. The third type may be described as "individual," small grants of land suitable for market gardening being made to soldiers and road-makers who ask to be demobilized in the country and who have the necessary experience. Two flourishing colonies of ex-Service men already exist near Addis Ababa.

The present watchword is "patience." Nowhere was the news of the Anglo-Italian agreement received with more pleasure than in Italian East Africa, not merely because it is expected to bring an increase in trade with the Sudan, but because it is clearly realized that the development of the Empire depends on a long period of peace in Europe.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 840.48 Refugees/1306 FOR despatch #1237
FROM Italy (Phillips) DATED Jan. 4, 1939
TO NAME 1-1127

REGARDING: Colonization by the Jewish Refugees
of the Plateau region in southern Ethiopia
and Kenya

Mussolini states the suggestion of - is
impracticable as this particular region is
inhabited by a people unsympathetic to the
Jews. He has offered a region northeast of
Addis Ababa, which the Jews themselves have
not received favorably.

865D.52 / 26

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 840.48 Refugees/1375 FOR Letter

FROM "New Times and Ethiopia News" (Pankhurst, E. Sylvia) DATED Jan. 17, 1939
// NAME 2-1127 ***

REGARDING: Settlement of Jews in Abyssinia.
Protests against-

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 840.48 Refugees/1428b FOR Letter

~~FROM~~ //// () DATED Feb. 3, 1939
TO President NAME 1-1127 070

REGARDING: Jewish settlement in Ethiopia. Encloses letter of
January 11 from Mussolini concerning possible-

b

865D.52/28

2 3

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

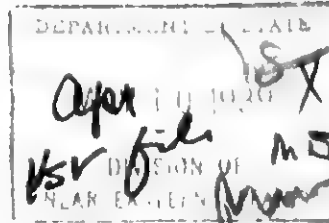
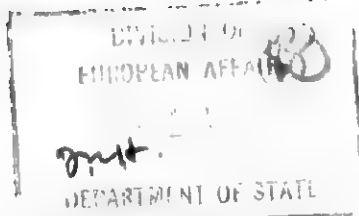
SEE 865.00/1802 FOR Despatch #3913

FROM France (Bullitt) DATED March 1, 1939
TO NAME 1-1157 070

REGARDING: Abyssinian colonization schemes. Statement of Mr. Royall Tyler that they-were a dismal failure.

865D.52/29

AMERICAN CONSULATE,
Nairobi, Colony of Kenya, Africa
February 24, 1939.



SUBJECT: Italians in Abyssinia.

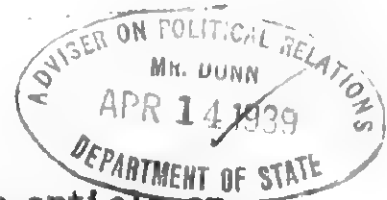
1-1088 GPO

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

WASHINGTON.

APR 17 1939



SIR:

I have the honor to quote below an article appearing in today's "East African Standard", which in turn is taken almost entirely from the "Economist". It is being transmitted as possibly the original article has not come to the Department's attention.

ITALIANS IN ABYSSINIA

" Figures suggesting that Italian migration to Abyssinia is falling considerably are given by the "Economist" in an article on February 11. The figures relate particularly to workmen.

The "Economist" states:

The monthly total of Italian workmen emigrating to Italy's new East African Empire has now declined to such an extent that it only amounts to a few hundred. At the same time the number of workmen repatriated has recently been averaging about 4,000 a month. As can be seen from the table shown below,

there

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

865 D.52/30

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there has been a net repatriation to Italy since January, 1937, which by last October had come to within 10,000 of the net emigration in 1935 and 1936 and promised shortly to exceed it.

Italian Workmen Emigrating to East Africa

	Up to end of January, 1937	Remainder of 1937	1938 to end Oct.	Total to end Oct.
Emigrants ..	168,111	23,938	6,629	198,678
Repatriated ..	59,997	81,364	47,157	188,518
Net emigration ..	108,114*	-57,426	-40,528	10,160

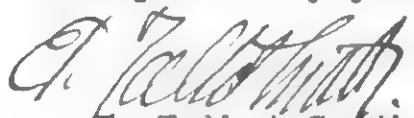
*About half in 1936

The Italian Government has now decided to cease publishing the number of repatriations on the ground that these include a large number of soldiers who remained in the Empire as workmen after demobilisation. This is, of course, the explanation of what seemed like becoming a paradox. But the position is none the less remarkable. It means that the number of Italian workmen in Abyssinia has so decreased that last October it was only 10,000 more than those demobilised soldiers (they cannot be many) who still remain in Africa as workmen after some 150,000 or more of their fellows have returned home.

Either the Italian Government is reducing its expenditure on road-building and other public works or the newly-acquired Empire is proving unattractive to Italian workmen, whether they originally left their native land as soldiers or civilians.

Or more probably both these hypotheses are correct."

Respectfully yours,


E. Talbot Smith
American Consul

800
ETS/GH

Original and four copies
to Department of State

Bishop St. John Divine
2032-5th Ave.
New York, N. Y.



STATION

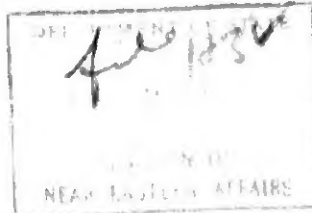


To His Excellency
Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt
President of the U. S. A.
Whitehouse
Washington, D. C.

state

NE

THE ETHIOPIAN CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION INC. 1920
AND
THE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ETHIOPIA
2032 Fifth Ave.
New York City



November 16, 1939.

To His Excellency Franklin D. Roosevelt, the President of the United States:

I am advised to call to your attention the appeal of one, Frank Vangildemeester in reference to having, the people of the United States raise five million dollars to colonize the Jews in Ethiopia in the Lake Tanner area.

5052

Now may we call to the President's attention to one fact. That the very name of Ethiopia means Black, as Caucasian means White. We feel, if the United States would intercede for anyone it should be for the benefit of the Darker Peoples to whom Ethiopia belongs. Since these intermingled people claim to be Jews and they disown their King Haile Selassie and will not own those, who are a kin to them. We ask you to investigate thoroughly before giving your approval to the idea of giving our land and our people.

One steals it and we purchase it, for we the Darker People of the United States feel that if any colonialization is to be made, the United States should have us expand, so that she could rule over us. It is ours and we know that the Levon Jews know that they were formerly Black, so that is why they want to return to Ethiopia.

Do you think we, the American people should shield them in their wrong doings? They are like some of the Black People, who have turned partly white and turn their noses at their Black parents.

They might just as well own their King, who descended from their King David and own their Black brothers there and return home the right way, without trying to have some government to have influence behind them to kill his Black brother, so he can have a home.

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(2)

We know all the time the Jew or Hebrew belong there, but they have roamed away and have changed.

Will you please let us know about this matter, because we are assisting in the return of Ethiopia's independence.

Sincerely yours,

On behalf of the Ethiopian
Federation.

P.S. Japan had no right in China, Italy had no right in Ethiopia, Germany had no right in Austria or Poland, and the Jews have no right in Ethiopia under the Italians, since Ethiopia still is fighting, it is dangerous for the Jews to be there.

Central File: Decimal File 865D.52, Internal Affairs Of States, Italian East Africa, Lands., May 29, 1936 - November 16, 1939. May 29, 1936 - November 16, 1939. MS European Colonialism in the Early 20th Century. National Archives (United States). Archives Unbound, link. link.gale.com%2Fapps%2Fdoc%2FSC5109727634%2FGDSC%3Fu%3Domni%26sid%3Dbookmark-GDSC. Accessed 18 June 2025.